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ADVENTURE SERIES
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SEGA
KNUCKLES™
THE ECHIDNA
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
SPAZ/GALAN/PENDERS
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PENDERS • SPAZIANTE • GALAN
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KNUCKLES

Book Nine

Dark Vengeance

Part Three of Three

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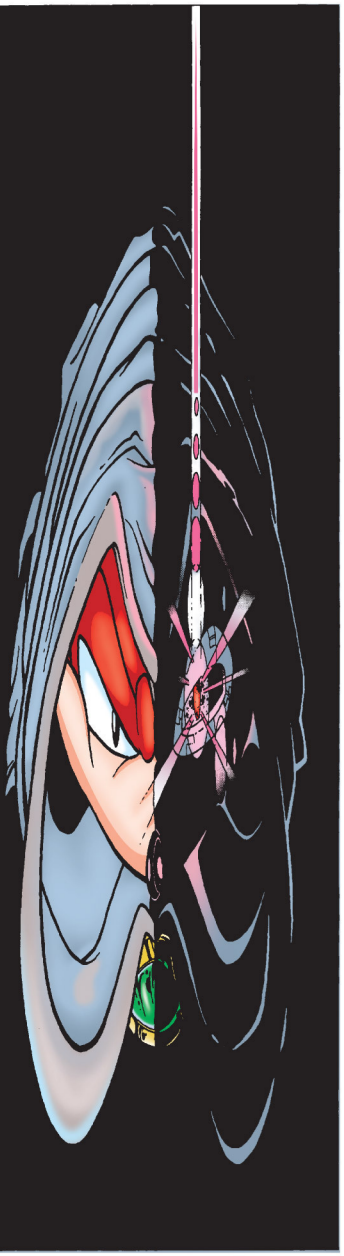
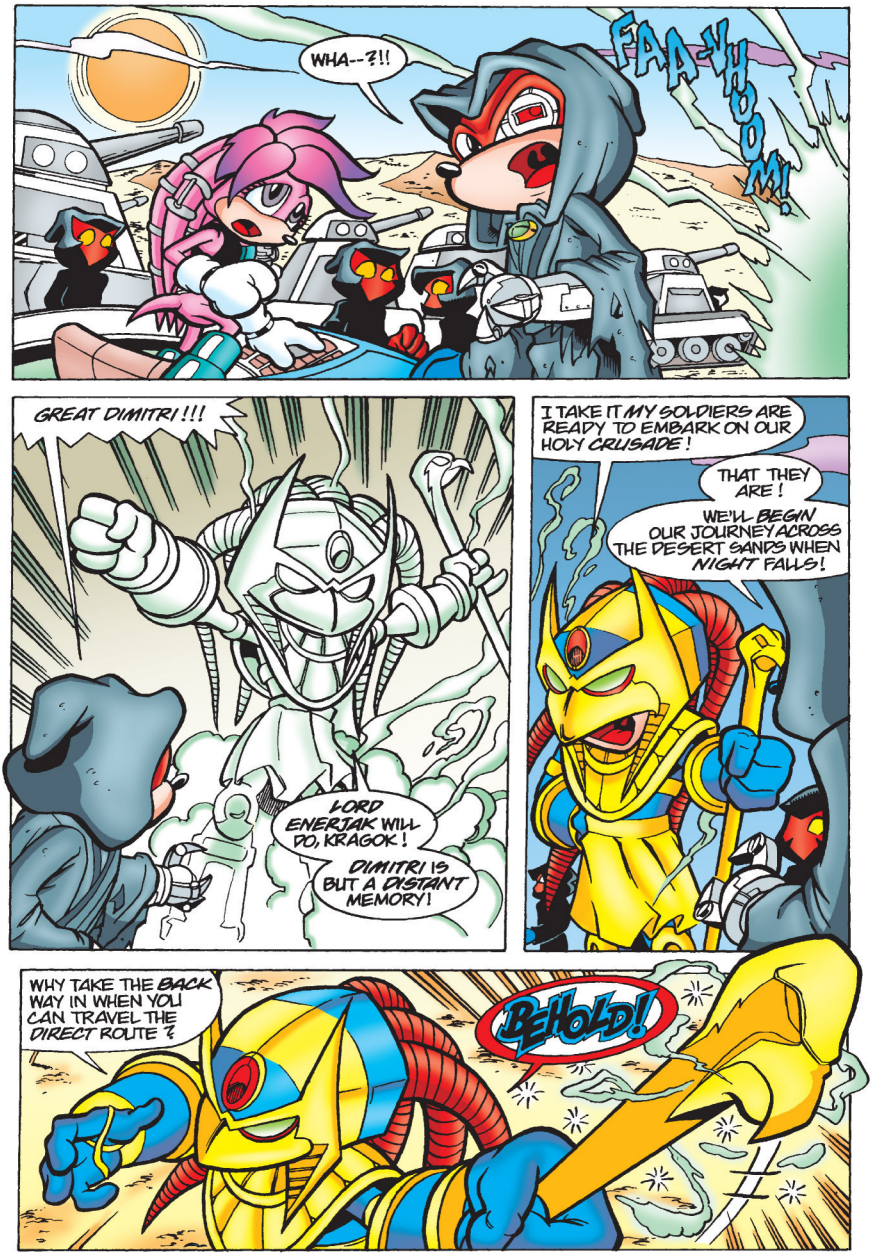


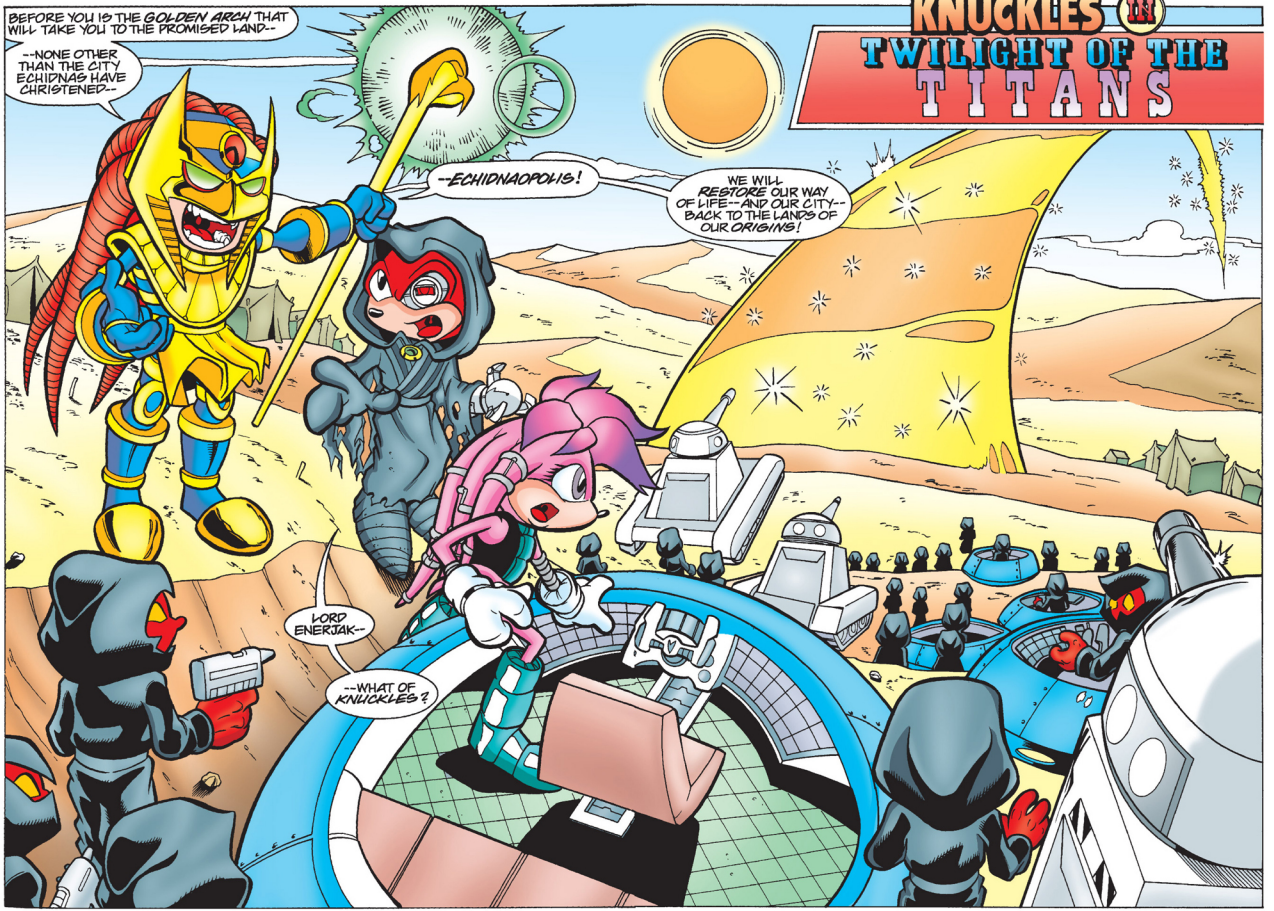
Born to the most noble of Echidna houses, the latest to continue the family heritage and responsibility as guardian of the floating island, defender of all from the forces of evil from the world beyond as well as those who would threaten within, he is none other than Knuckles the Echidna!

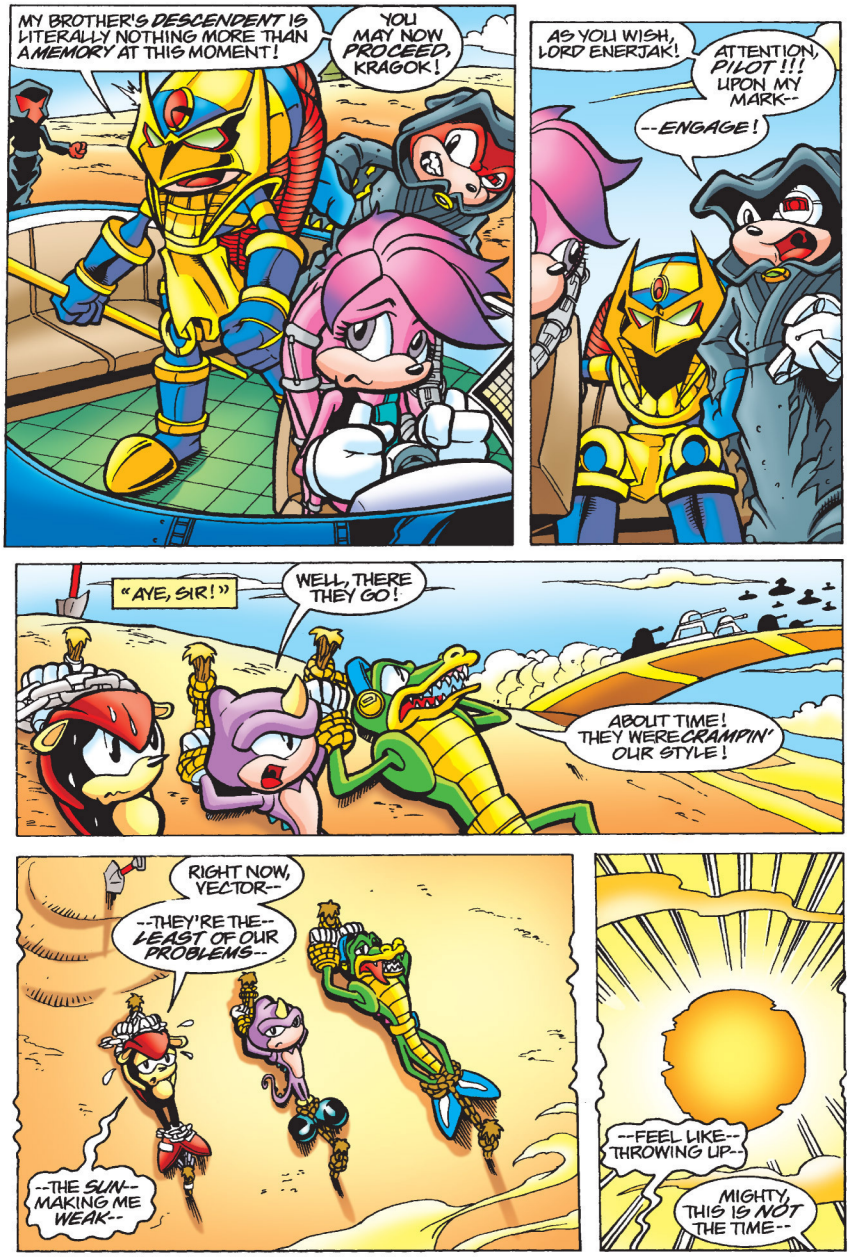
Here is all you need to know:

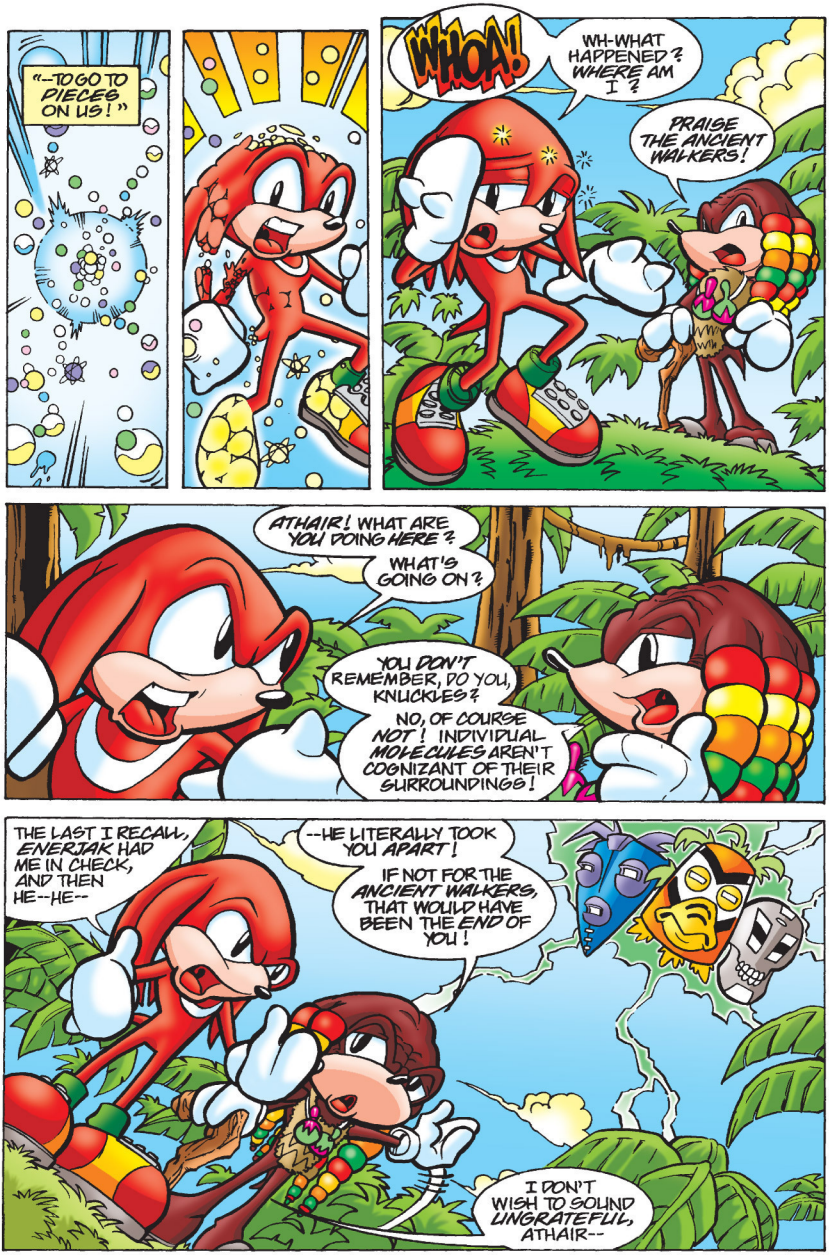
The Echidna known as Knuckles does not exist -- at least in any form one can relate to. He was literally taken apart bit by molecular bit courtesy of the awesome power wielded by his great uncle seventeen generations removed... the being known as Enerjak!

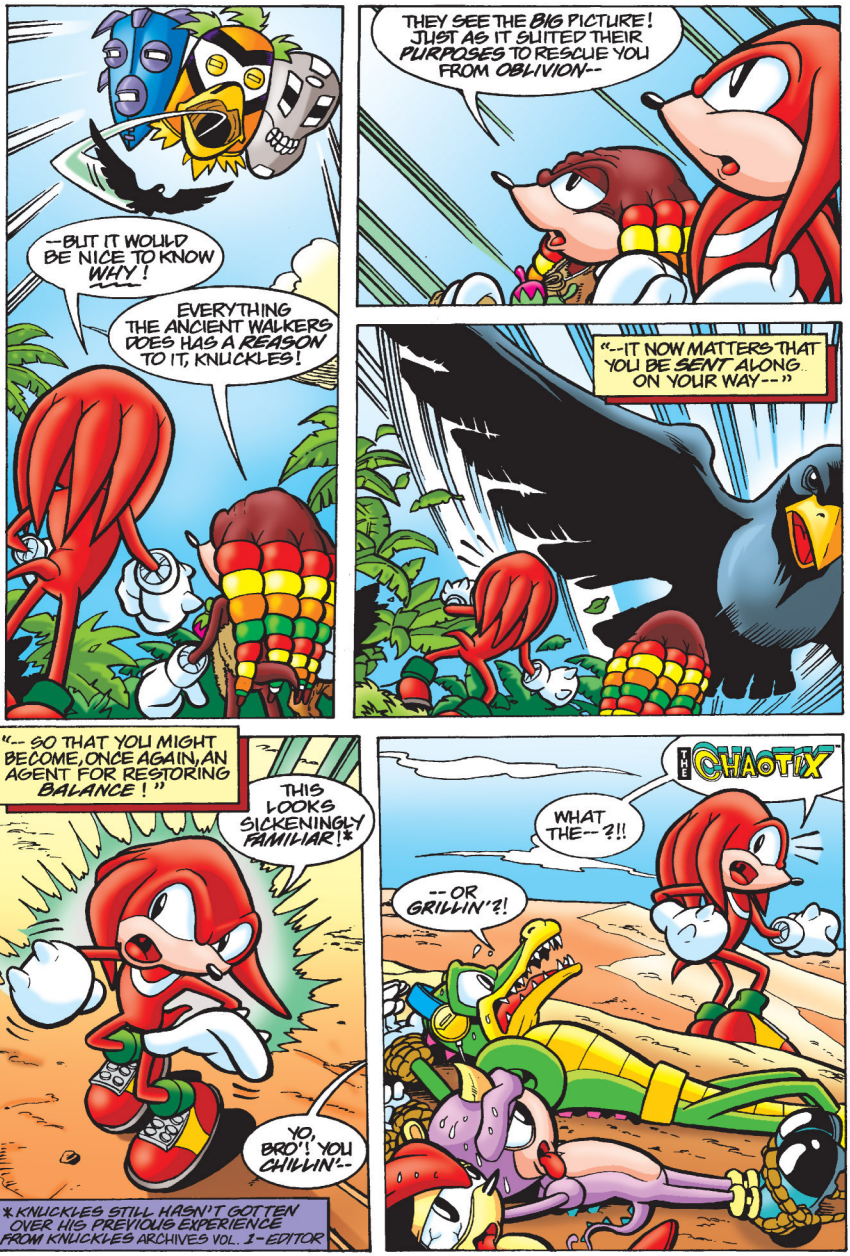
Now that his greatest enemy is completely out of the way, it's time for fun and games as Enerjak seeks new challenges and horizons to conquer...

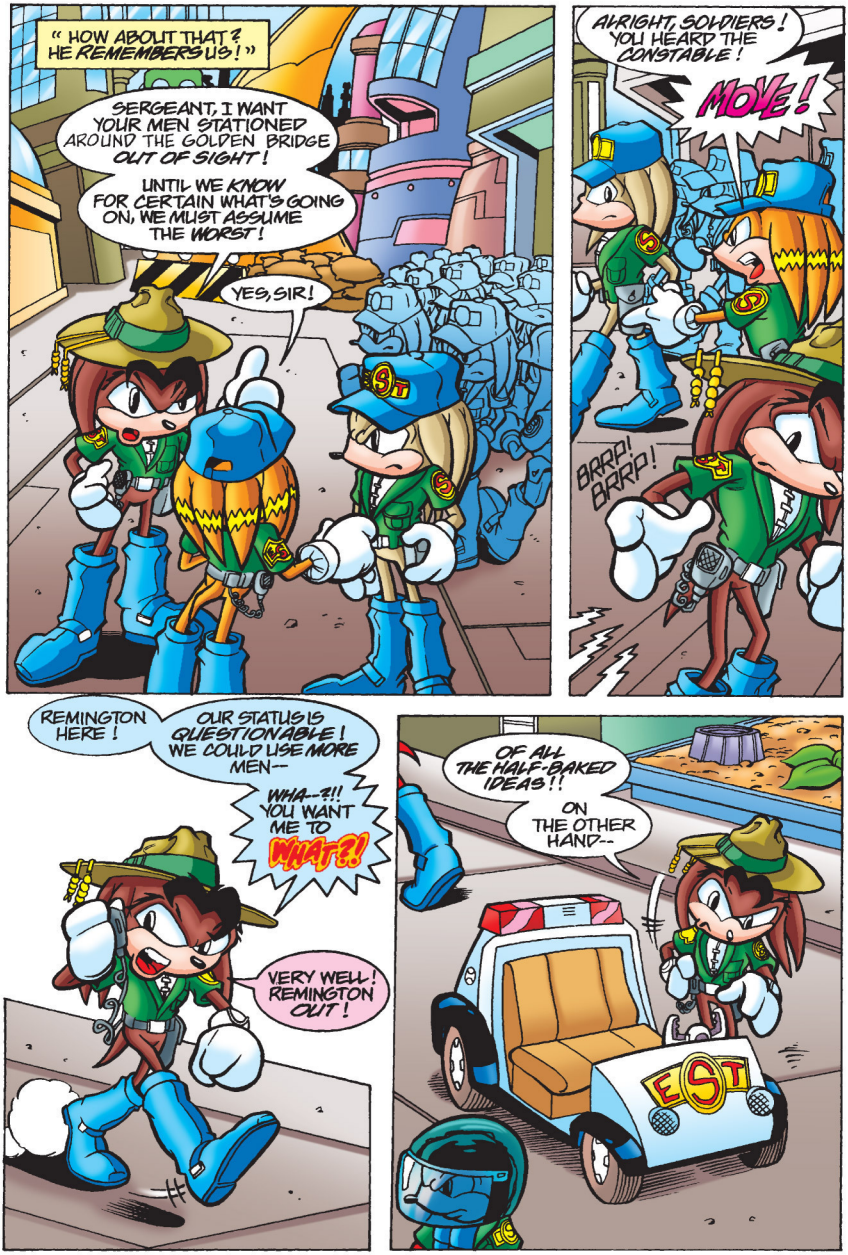

WHA--?!!
FAA-WHOOM!
GREAT DIMITRI!!!
LORD ENERJAK WILL DO, KRAGOK!
DIMITRI IS BUT A DISTANT MEMORY!
I TAKE IT MY SOLDIERS ARE READY TO EMBARK ON OUR HOLY CRUSADE!
THAT THEY ARE!
WE'LL BEGIN OUR JOURNEY ACROSS THE DESERT SANDS WHEN NIGHT FALLS!
WHY TAKE THE BACK WAY IN WHEN YOU CAN TRAVEL THE DIRECT ROUTE?
BEHOLD!

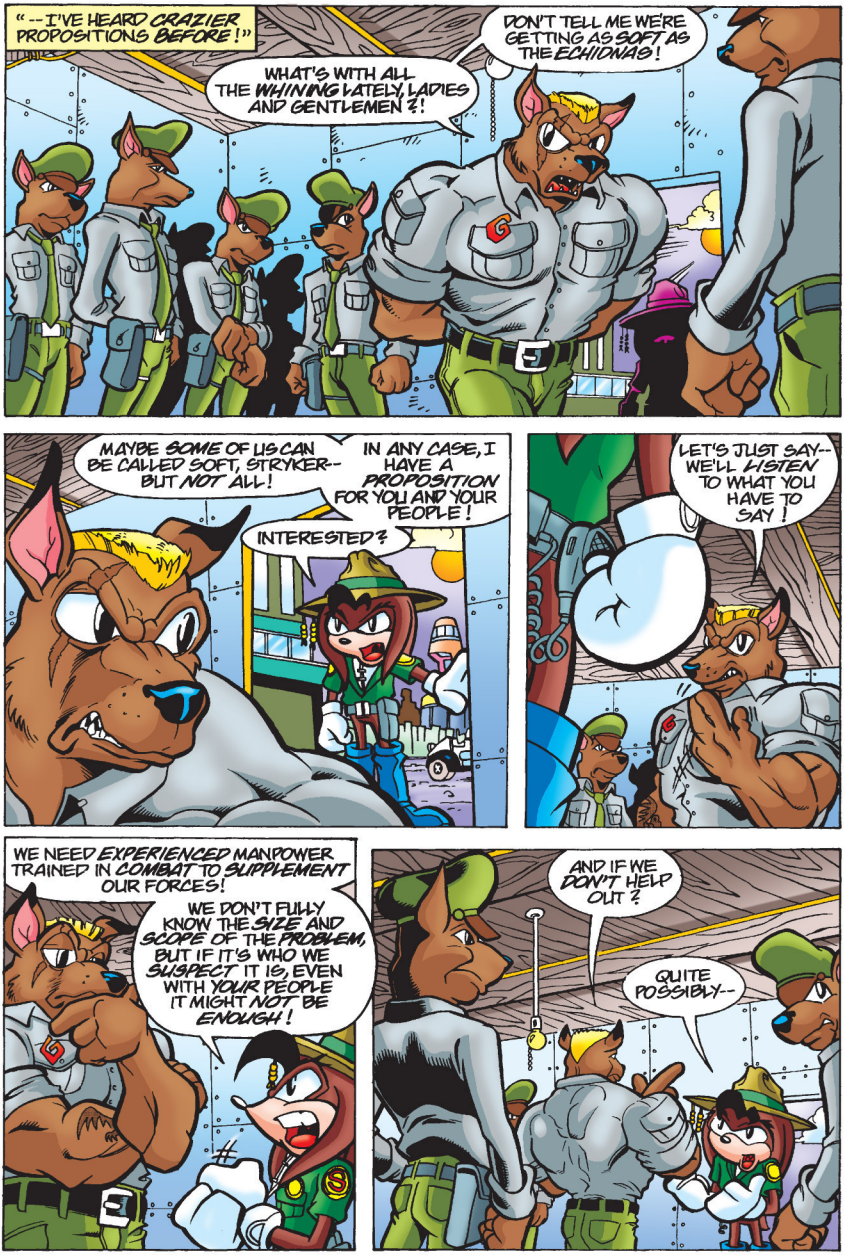

KNUCKLES
TWILIGHT OF THE TITANS
BEFORE YOU IS THE GOLDEN ARCH THAT WILL TAKE YOU TO THE PROMISED LAND--
--NONE OTHER THAN THE CITY ECHIDNAS HAVE CHRISTENED--
--ECHIDNAOPOLIS!
WE WILL RESTORE OUR WAY OF LIFE--AND OUR CITY--BACK TO THE LANDS OF OUR ORIGINS!
LORD ENERJAK--
--WHAT OF KNUCKLES?

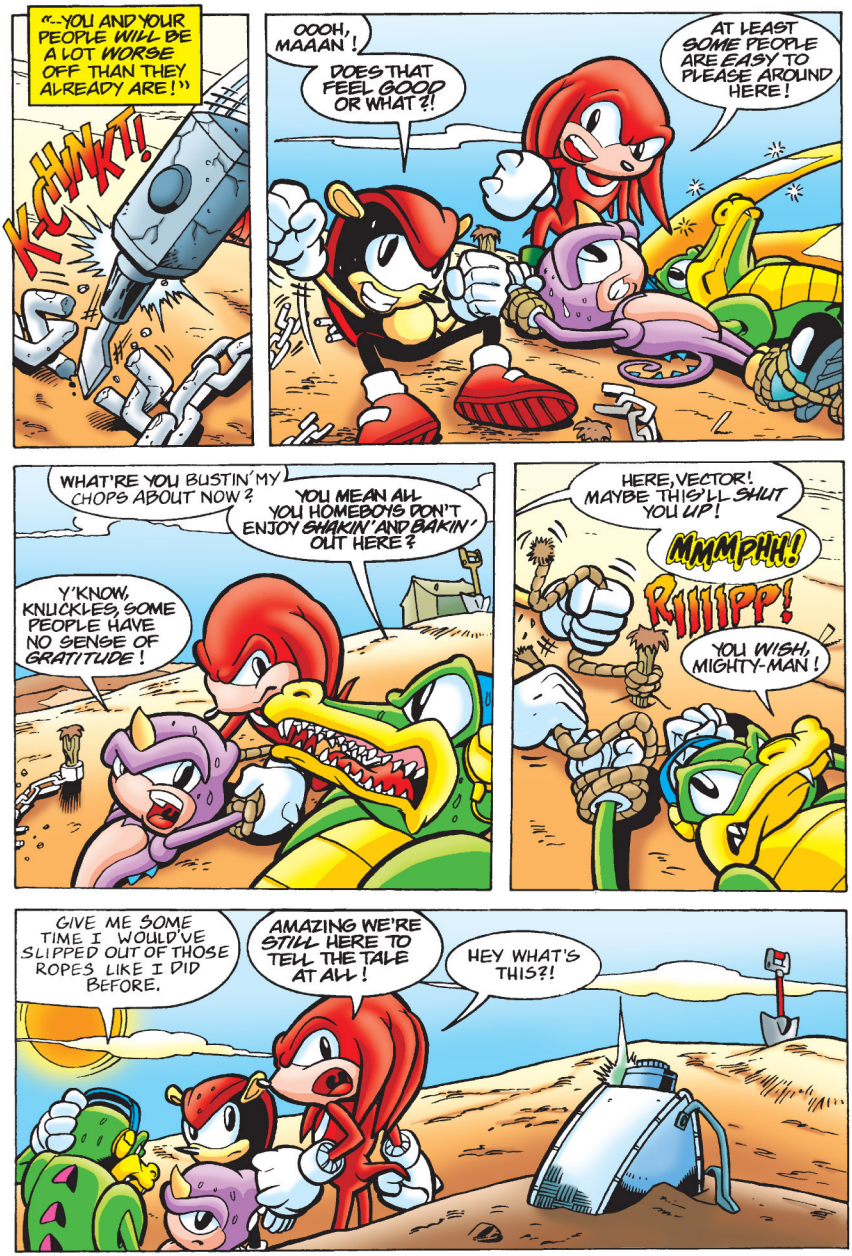

MY BROTHER'S DESCENDENT IS LITERALLY NOTHING MORE THAN A MEMORY AT THIS MOMENT!
YOU MAY NOW PROCEED, KRAGOK!
AS YOU WISH, LORD ENERJAK!
ATTENTION, PILOT!!! UPON MY MARK--
--ENGAGE!
"AYE, SIR!"
WELL, THERE THEY GO!
ABOUT TIME! THEY WERE CRAMPIN' OUR STYLE!
RIGHT NOW, VECTOR--
--THEY'RE THE-- LEAST OF OUR PROBLEMS--
--THE SUN-- MAKING ME WEAK--
--FEEL LIKE-- THROWING UP--
MIGHTY, THIS IS NOT THE TIME--

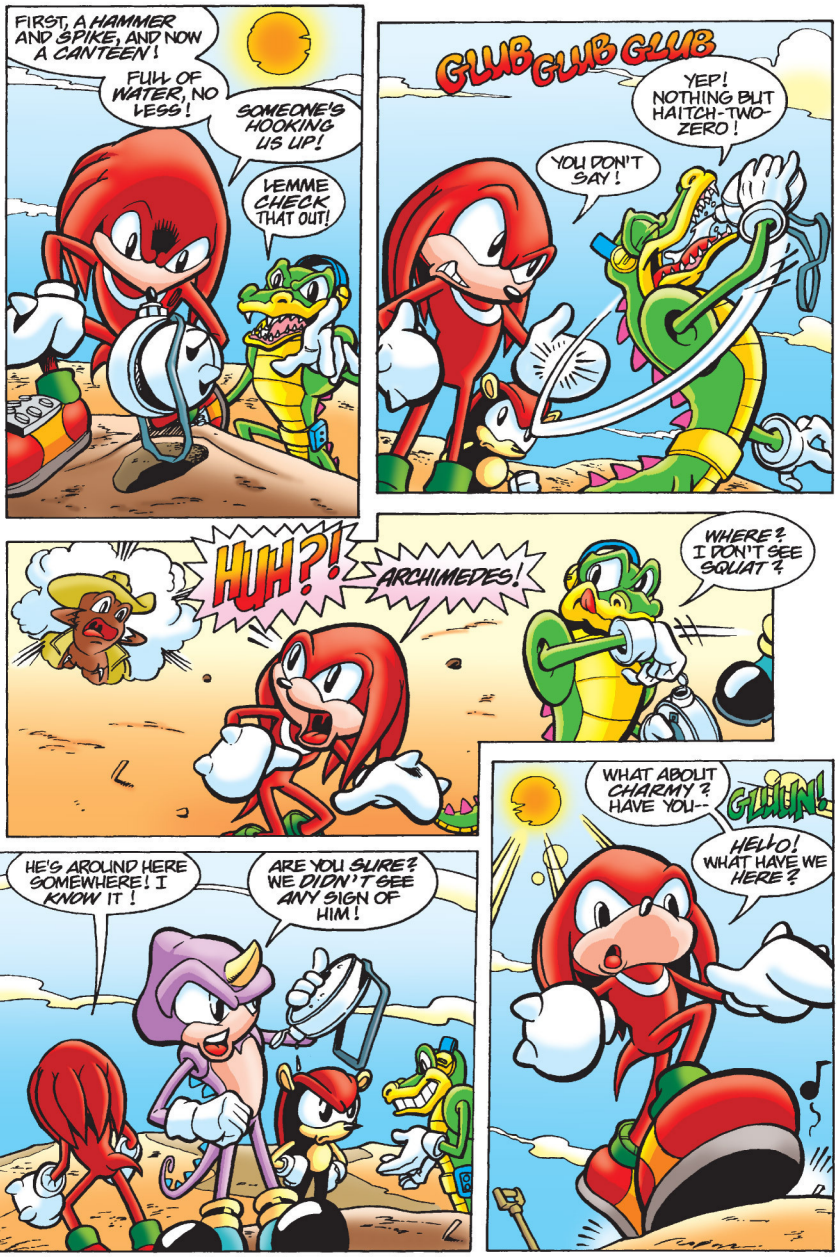

"--TO GO TO PIECES ON US!"
WHOA!
WH-WHAT HAPPENED? WHERE AM I?
PRAISE THE ANCIENT WALKERS!
ATHAIR! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WHAT'S GOING ON?
YOU DON'T REMEMBER, DO YOU, KNUCKLES?
NO, OF COURSE NOT! INDIVIDUAL MOLECULES AREN'T COGNIZANT OF THEIR SURROUNDINGS!
THE LAST I RECALL, ENERJAK HAD ME IN CHECK, AND THEN HE--HE--
--HE LITERALLY TOOK YOU APART!
IF NOT FOR THE ANCIENT WALKERS, THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE END OF YOU!
I DON'T WISH TO SOUND UNGRATEFUL, ATHAIR--

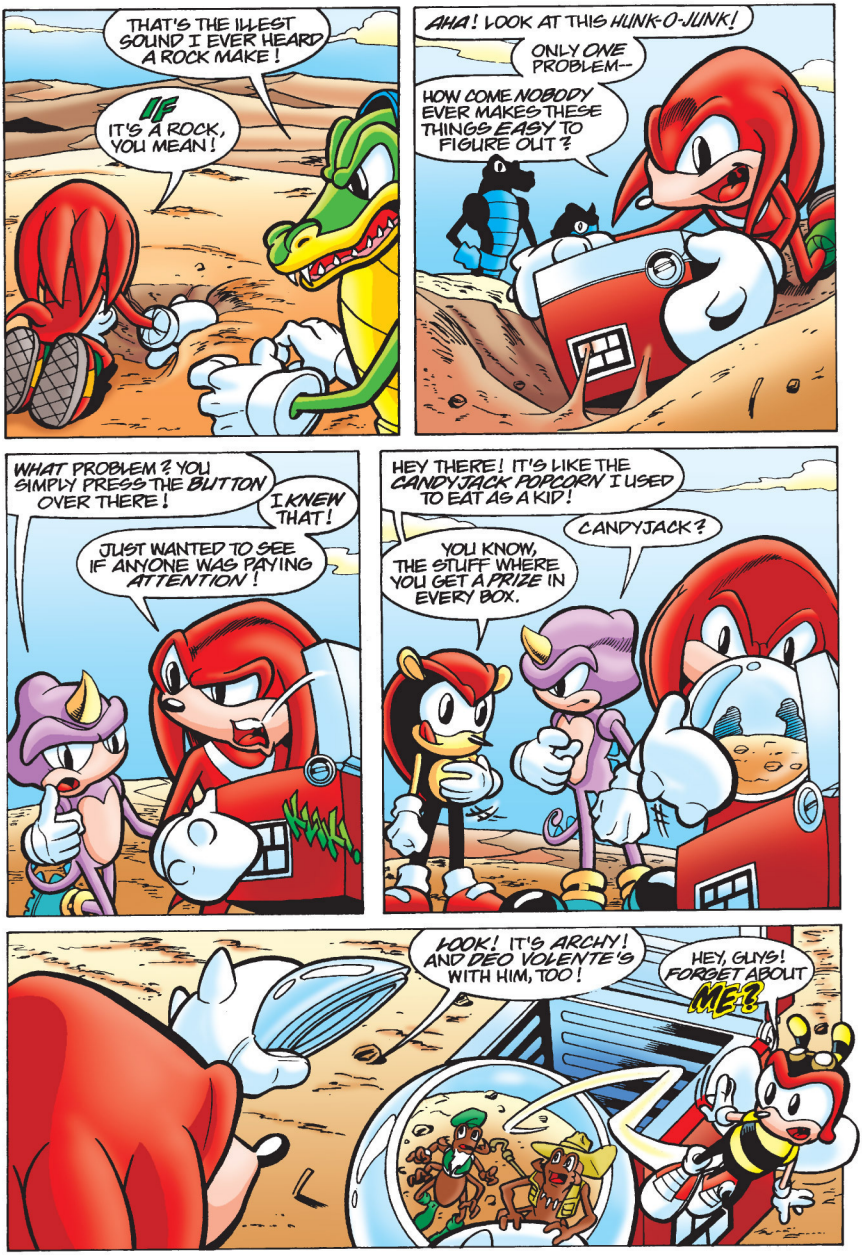

—BUT IT WOULD BE NICE TO KNOW WHY!
EVERYTHING THE ANCIENT WALKERS DOES HAS A REASON TO IT, KNUCKLES!
THEY SEE THE BIG PICTURE! JUST AS IT SUITED THEIR PURPOSES TO RESCUE YOU FROM OBLIVION--
"--IT NOW MATTERS THAT YOU BE SENT ALONG ON YOUR WAY--"
"--SO THAT YOU MIGHT BECOME, ONCE AGAIN, AN AGENT FOR RESTORING BALANCE!"
THIS LOOKS SICKENINGLY FAMILIAR!*
YO, BRO'! YOU CHILLIN'--
*KNUCKLES STILL HASN'T GOTTEN OVER HIS PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE FROM KNUCKLES ARCHIVES VOL. 1—EDITOR
THE CHAOTIX
WHAT THE--?!!
--OR GRILLIN'?!


"HOW ABOUT THAT? HE REMEMBERS US!"
SERGEANT, I WANT YOUR MEN STATIONED AROUND THE GOLDEN BRIDGE OUT OF SIGHT!
UNTIL WE KNOW FOR CERTAIN WHAT'S GOING ON, WE MUST ASSUME THE WORST!
YES, SIR!
ALRIGHT, SOLDIERS! YOU HEARD THE CONSTABLE!
MOVE!
BRRP! BRRP!
REMINGTON HERE!
OUR STATUS IS QUESTIONABLE! WE COULD USE MORE MEN--
WHA--?!! YOU WANT ME TO WHAT?!
VERY WELL! REMINGTON OUT!
OF ALL THE HALF-BAKED IDEAS!!
ON THE OTHER HAND--
EST

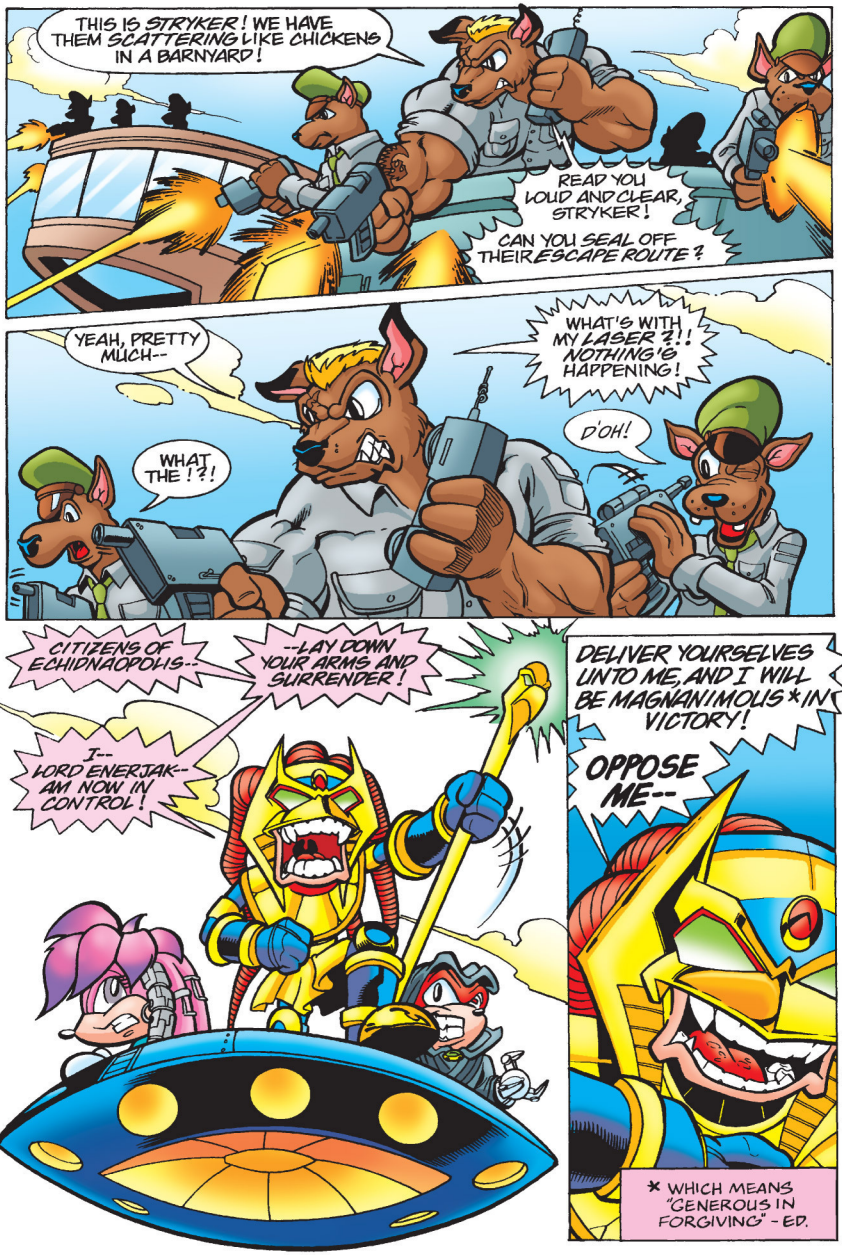

"--I'VE HEARD CRAZIER PROPOSITIONS BEFORE!"
WHAT'S WITH ALL THE WHINING LATELY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN?!
DON'T TELL ME WE'RE GETTING AS SOFT AS THE ECHIDNAS!
MAYBE SOME OF US CAN BE CALLED SOFT, STRYKER-- BUT NOT ALL!
IN ANY CASE, I HAVE A PROPOSITION FOR YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE!
INTERESTED?
LET'S JUST SAY-- WE'LL LISTEN TO WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY!
WE NEED EXPERIENCED MANPOWER TRAINED IN COMBAT TO SUPPLEMENT OUR FORCES!
WE DON'T FULLY KNOW THE SIZE AND SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM, BUT IF IT'S WHO WE SUSPECT IT IS, EVEN WITH YOUR PEOPLE IT MIGHT NOT BE ENOUGH!
AND IF WE DON'T HELP OUT?
QUITE POSSIBLY--

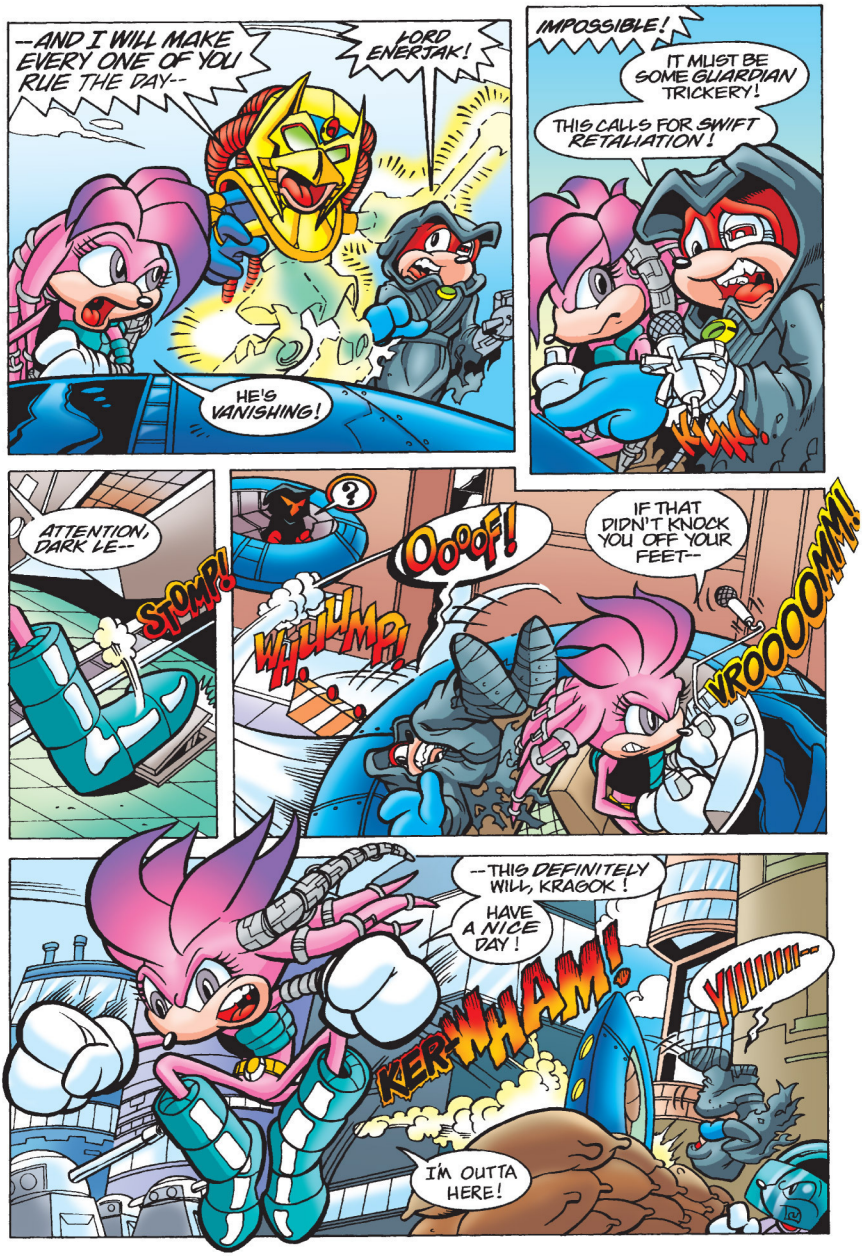

"--YOU AND YOUR PEOPLE WILL BE A LOT WORSE OFF THAN THEY ALREADY ARE!"
K-CHUNK!!
OOOH, MAAAN!
DOES THAT FEEL GOOD OR WHAT?!
AT LEAST SOME PEOPLE ARE EASY TO PLEASE AROUND HERE!
WHAT'RE YOU BUSTIN' MY CHOPS ABOUT NOW?
YOU MEAN ALL YOU HOMEBOYS DON'T ENJOY SHAKIN' AND BAKIN' OUT HERE?
Y'KNOW, KNUCKLES, SOME PEOPLE HAVE NO SENSE OF GRATITUDE!
HERE, VECTOR! MAYBE THIS'LL SHUT YOU UP!
MMMPHH!
RIIIIPP!
YOU WISH, MIGHTY-MAN!
GIVE ME SOME TIME I WOULD'VE SLIPPED OUT OF THOSE ROPES LIKE I DID BEFORE.
AMAZING WE'RE STILL HERE TO TELL THE TALE AT ALL!
HEY WHAT'S THIS?!

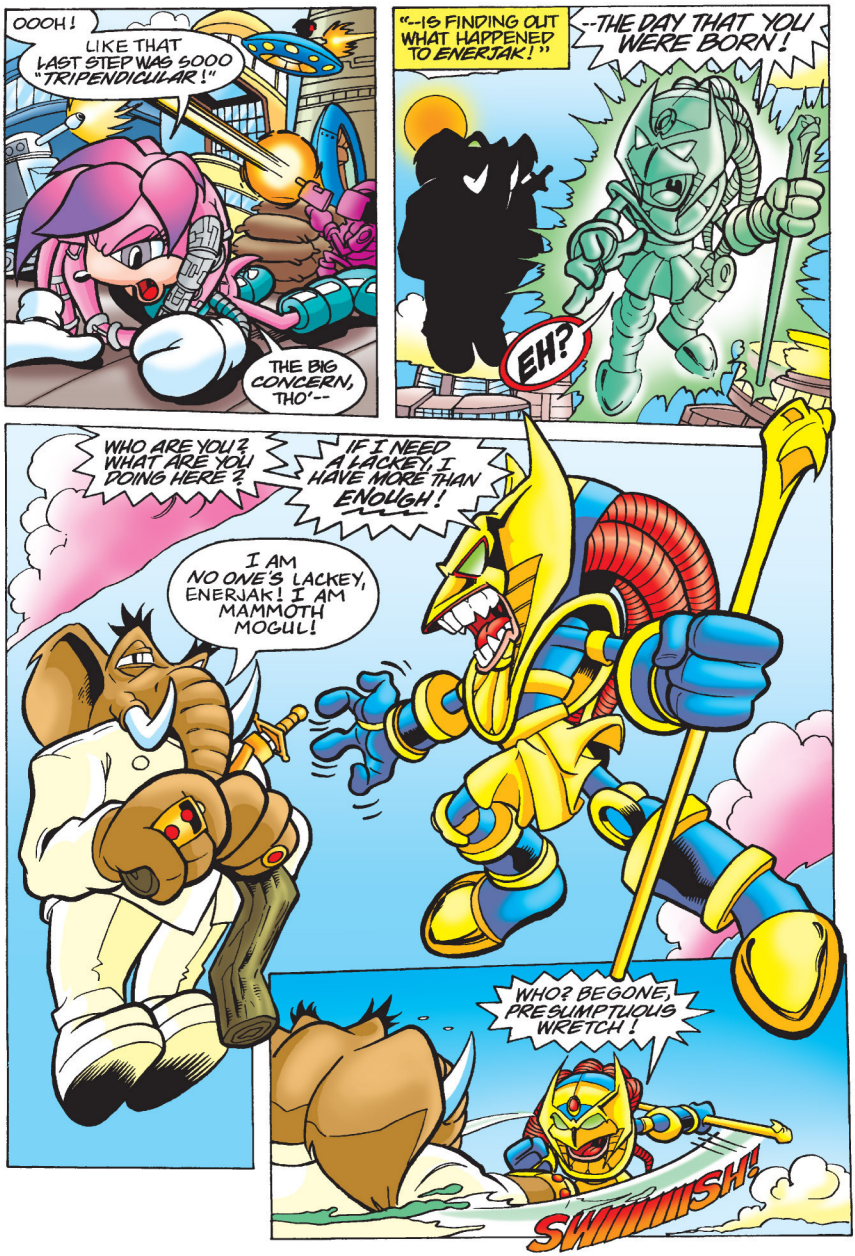

FIRST, A HAMMER AND SPIKE, AND NOW A CANTEEN!
FULL OF WATER, NO LESS!
SOMEONE'S HOOKING US UP!
LEMME CHECK THAT OUT!
GLUB GLUB GLUB
YEP! NOTHING BUT HAITCH-TWO-ZERO!
YOU DON'T SAY!
HUH?!
ARCHIMEDES!
WHERE? I DON'T SEE SQUAT?
WHAT ABOUT CHARMY? HAVE YOU--
GLULN!
HELLO! WHAT HAVE WE HERE?
HE'S AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE! I KNOW IT!
ARE YOU SURE? WE DIDN'T SEE ANY SIGN OF HIM!


THAT'S THE ILLEST SOUND I EVER HEARD A ROCK MAKE!
IF IT'S A ROCK, YOU MEAN!
AHA! LOOK AT THIS HUNK-O-JUNK!
ONLY ONE PROBLEM--
HOW COME NOBODY EVER MAKES THESE THINGS EASY TO FIGURE OUT?
WHAT PROBLEM? YOU SIMPLY PRESS THE BUTTON OVER THERE!
I KNEW THAT!
JUST WANTED TO SEE IF ANYONE WAS PAYING ATTENTION!
HEY THERE! IT'S LIKE THE CANDYJACK POPCORN I USED TO EAT AS A KID!
CANDYJACK?
YOU KNOW, THE STUFF WHERE YOU GET A PRIZE IN EVERY BOX.
LOOK! IT'S ARCHY! AND DEO VOLENTE'S WITH HIM, TOO!
HEY, GUYS! FORGET ABOUT ME?

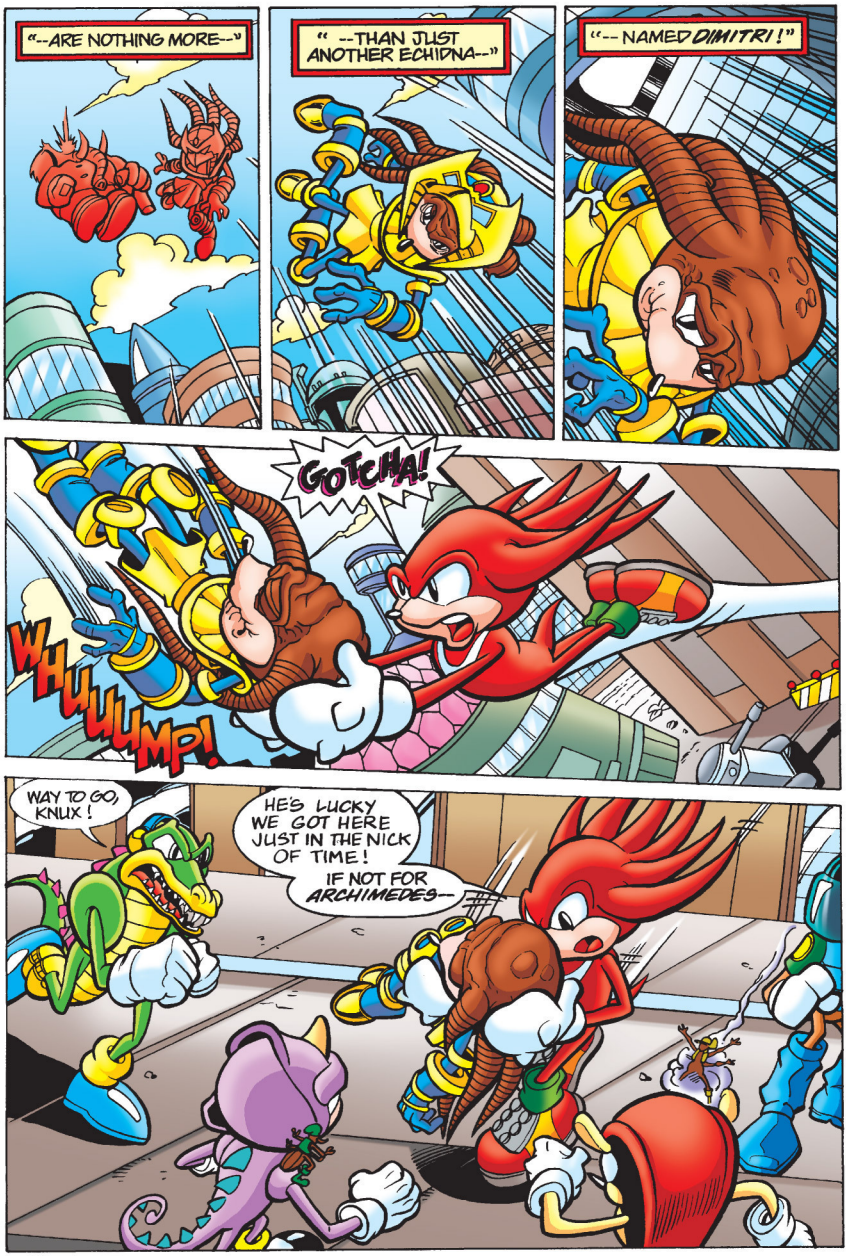
"NOT EVEN IF WE TRIED, CHARMY!"
HIT 'EM HARD! HIT 'EM FAST! HIT 'EM WITH ALL YOU GOT!
WE TAKE NO PRISONERS!
COMMANDER KRAGOK, THERE'S A BARRIER DEAD AHEAD!
WE DON'T STOP FOR ANYTHING, PILOT!
"FULL SPEED AHEAD! RAM 'EM!"
FIRST PLATOON--
COMMENCE ATTACK!
THEY'RE ON THE ROOFTOPS, AS WELL!
BREAK FORMATION!

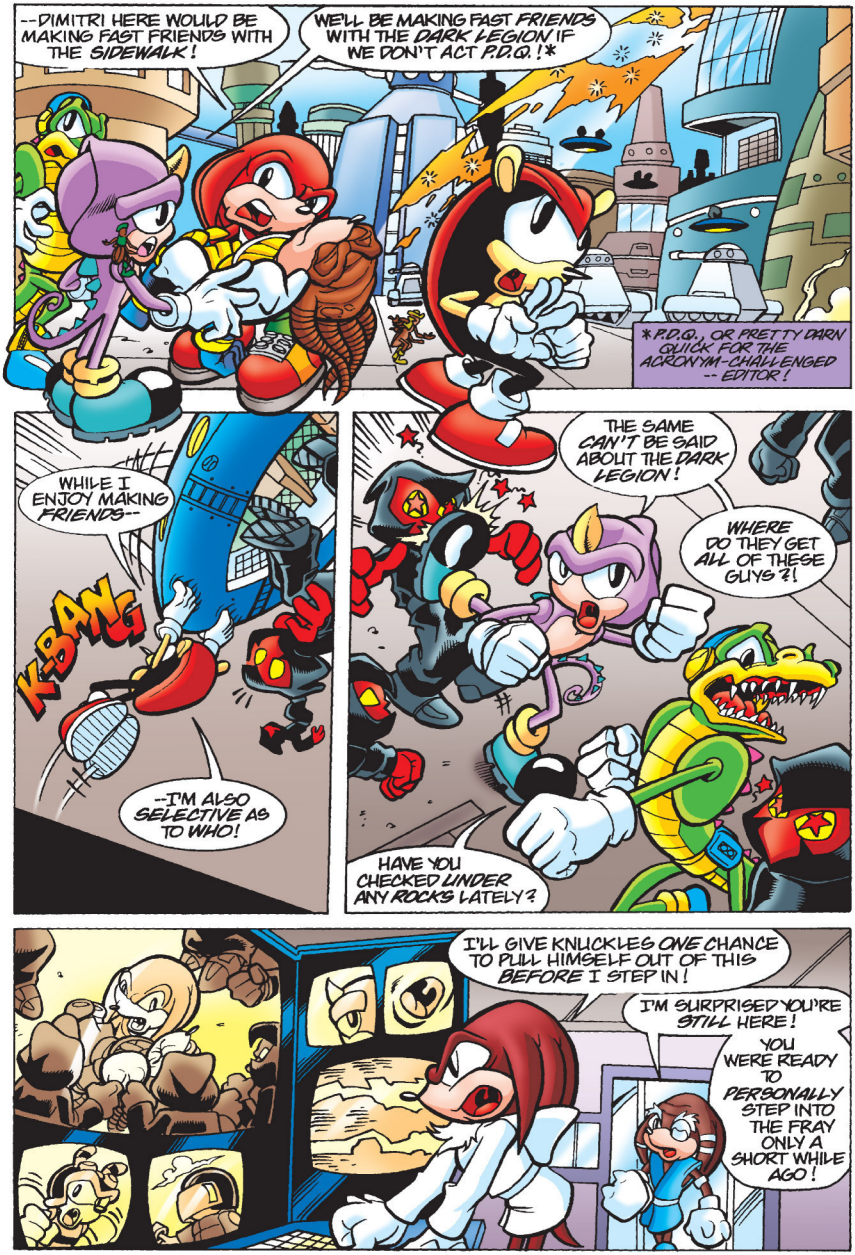

THIS IS STRYKER! WE HAVE THEM SCATTERING LIKE CHICKENS IN A BARNYARD!
READ YOU LOUD AND CLEAR, STRYKER!
CAN YOU SEAL OFF THEIR ESCAPE ROUTE?
YEAH, PRETTY MUCH--
WHAT'S WITH MY LASER?!! NOTHING'S HAPPENING!
D'OH!
WHAT THE!?!
CITIZENS OF ECHIDNAOPOLIS--
--LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS AND SURRENDER!
I-- LORD ENERJAK-- AM NOW IN CONTROL!
DELIVER YOURSELVES UNTO ME, AND I WILL BE MAGNANIMOUS* IN VICTORY!
OPPOSE ME--
* WHICH MEANS "GENEROUS IN FORGIVING" - ED.

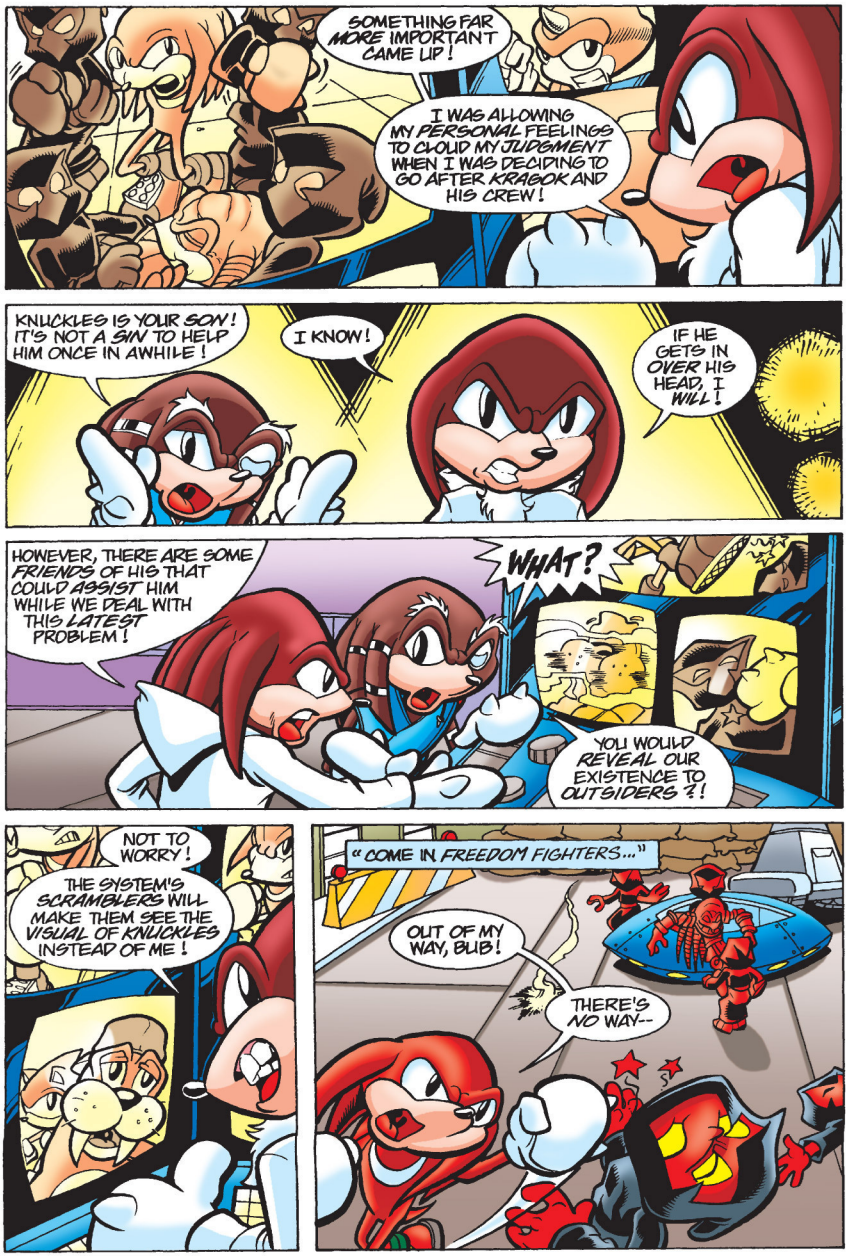

--AND I WILL MAKE EVERY ONE OF YOU RUE THE DAY--
LORD ENERTJAK!
HE'S VANISHING!
IMPOSSIBLE!
IT MUST BE SOME GUARDIAN TRICKERY!
THIS CALLS FOR SWIFT RETALIATION!
KLIK!
ATTENTION, DARK LE--
STOMP!
?
OOOOF!
WHUMP!
IF THAT DIDN'T KNOCK YOU OFF YOUR FEET--
VROOOOM!!!
--THIS DEFINITELY WILL, KRAGOK!
HAVE A NICE DAY!
KER-WHAM!
YIIIIIIII--
I'M OUTTA HERE!


OOOH!
LIKE THAT LAST STEP WAS SOOO "TRIPENDICULAR!"
THE BIG CONCERN, THO'--
"--IS FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO ENERJAK!"
--THE DAY THAT YOU WERE BORN!
EH?
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
IF I NEED A LACKEY, I HAVE MORE THAN ENOUGH!
I AM NO ONE'S LACKEY, ENERJAK! I AM MAMMOTH MOGUL!
WHO? BEGONE, PRESUMPTUOUS WRETCH!
SWIIIIISH!

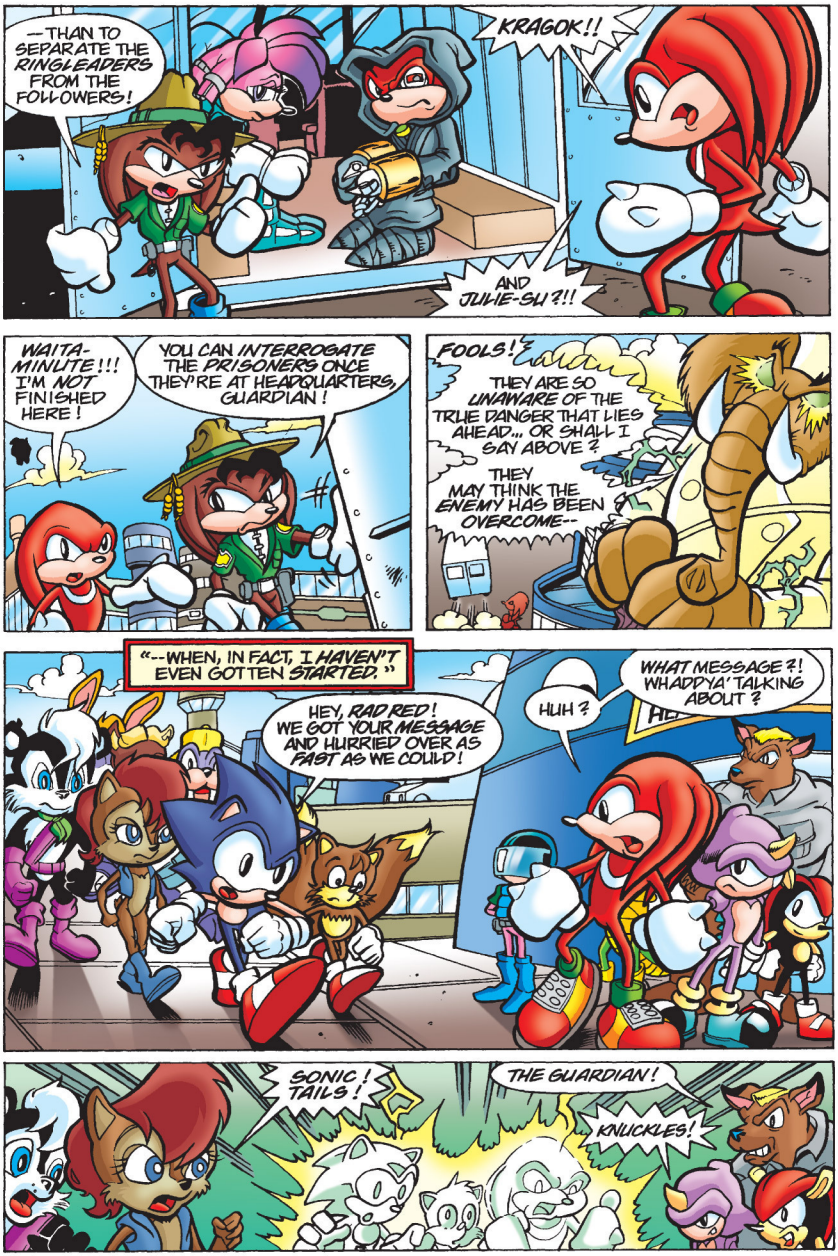
THAT SHOULD SERVE AS A LESSON TO THOSE WHO WOULD THWART MY WILL!
IF THERE ARE ANY LESSONS TO BE LEARNED--
PHOOFF!
--IT'S ONE YOU SO OBVIOUSLY FORGOT!
AS I BEGIN TO ABSORB THE INCALCULABLE POWER YOU POSSESS--
--THROUGH THE POWER OF THE SWORD OF ACORNS, WHICH ACTS AS A SUPER CONDUCTOR, ALLOWING YOUR ENERGY TO FLOW TO ME--*
* YES, FANS! HE HAD THIS PLANNED SINCE HE STOLE THE SWORD IN SONIC SELECT VOL. 3
---- EDITOR
--CONSIDER THIS--
--THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE ELSE WHO IS SMARTER, STRONGER AND EVEN MORE RUTHLESS THAN YOU.
DUE TO MY SUPERIOR PATIENCE AND PLANNING, NOW I-- I-- AM THE POWER!
YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND--

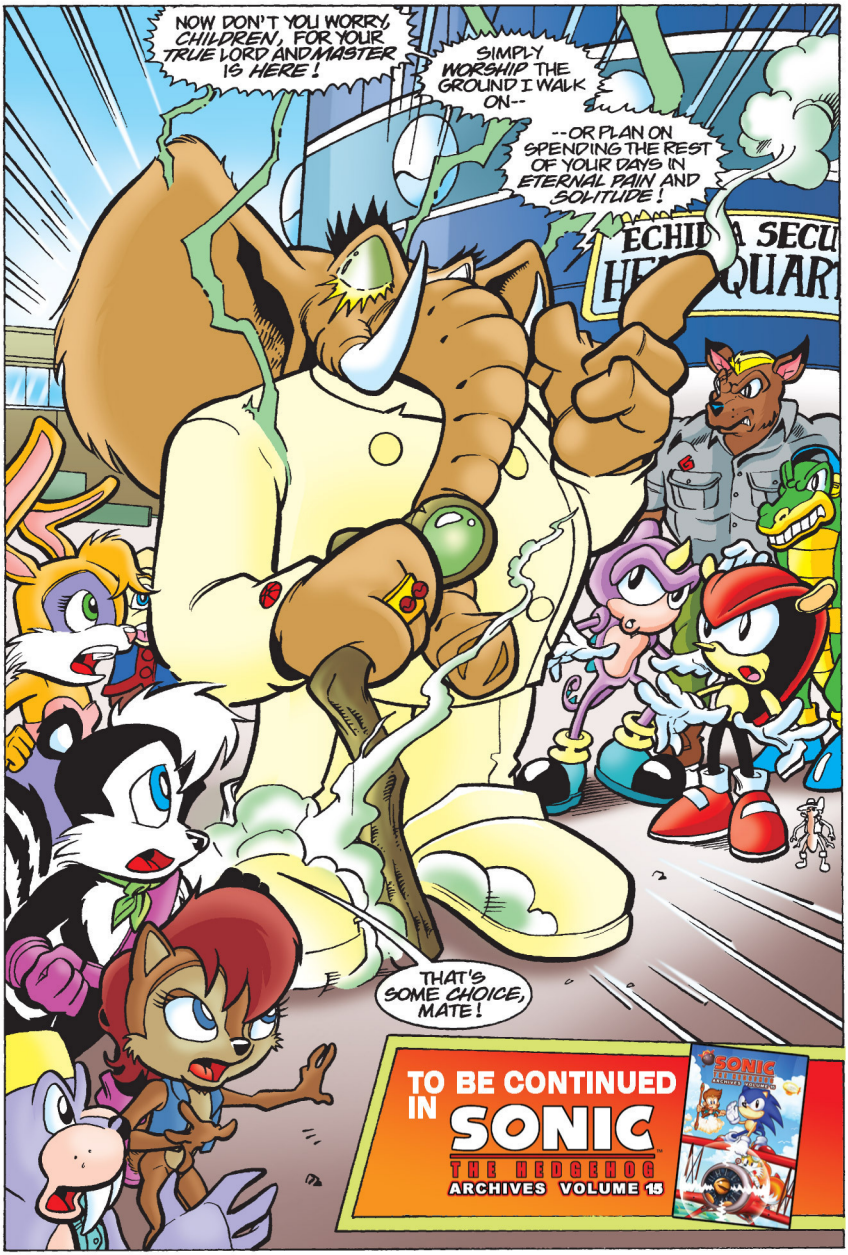

"--ARE NOTHING MORE--"
" --THAN JUST ANOTHER ECHIDNA--"
"--NAMED DIMITRI!"
GOTCHA!
WHUUUMP!
WAY TO GO, KNUX!
HE'S LUCKY WE GOT HERE JUST IN THE NICK OF TIME!
IF NOT FOR ARCHIMEDES--


--DIMITRI HERE WOULD BE MAKING FAST FRIENDS WITH THE SIDEWALK!
WE'LL BE MAKING FAST FRIENDS WITH THE DARK LEGION IF WE DON'T ACT P.D.Q.!*
*P.D.Q., OR PRETTY DARN QUICK FOR THE ACRONYM-CHALLENGED -- EDITOR!
WHILE I ENJOY MAKING FRIENDS--
K-BANG
--I'M ALSO SELECTIVE AS TO WHO!
THE SAME CAN'T BE SAID ABOUT THE DARK LEGION!
WHERE DO THEY GET ALL OF THESE GUYS?!
HAVE YOU CHECKED UNDER ANY ROCKS LATELY?
I'LL GIVE KNUCKLES ONE CHANCE TO PULL HIMSELF OUT OF THIS BEFORE I STEP IN!
I'M SURPRISED YOU'RE STILL HERE!
YOU WERE READY TO PERSONALLY STEP INTO THE FRAY ONLY A SHORT WHILE AGO!


SOMETHING FAR MORE IMPORTANT CAME UP!
I WAS ALLOWING MY PERSONAL FEELINGS TO CLOUD MY JUDGMENT WHEN I WAS DECIDING TO GO AFTER KRAGOK AND HIS CREW!
KNUCKLES IS YOUR SON! IT'S NOT A SIN TO HELP HIM ONCE IN AWHILE!
I KNOW!
IF HE GETS IN OVER HIS HEAD, I WILL!
HOWEVER, THERE ARE SOME FRIENDS OF HIS THAT COULD ASSIST HIM WHILE WE DEAL WITH THIS LATEST PROBLEM!
WHAT?
YOU! WOULD REVEAL OUR EXISTENCE TO OUTSIDERS?!
NOT TO WORRY!
THE SYSTEM'S SCRAMBLERS WILL MAKE THEM SEE THE VISUAL OF KNUCKLES INSTEAD OF ME!
"COME IN, FREEDOM FIGHTERS..."
OUT OF MY WAY, BUB!
THERE'S NO WAY--

--I'M GOING TO LET YOU CLOWNS GET THE BETTER OF ME!
WOOF!
THUUMP!
KNUCKLES! ARE YOU HURT?
ONLY MY PRIDE!
I SHOULD HAVE HAD HIM!
LOOKS LIKE CONSTABLE REMINGTON AND HIS MEN ARE JOINING US!
JUST WHEN WE DIDN'T NEED THEM!
MAYBE THEY NEED US, VECTOR! THEY MAY STILL BE FIGHTING THE DARK LEGION!
E.S.T.
E.S.T.
WHAT'S THE LATEST?
WE'VE GOT THE BEGGARS ON THE RUN!
ISN'T THAT COUNTERPRODUCTIVE?
WOULDN'T WE RATHER PUT 'EM OUT OF BUSINESS PERMENENTLY?
MY THOUGHTS EXACTLY!
WHAT BETTER WAY TO START--
E.


—THAN TO SEPARATE THE RINGLEADERS FROM THE FOLLOWERS!
KRAGOK!!
AND JULIE-SU?!!
WAITA-MINUTE!!! I'M NOT FINISHED HERE!
YOU CAN INTERROGATE THE PRISONERS ONCE THEY'RE AT HEADQUARTERS, GUARDIAN!
FOOLS!
THEY ARE SO UNAWARE OF THE TRUE DANGER THAT LIES AHEAD... OR SHALL I SAY ABOVE?
THEY MAY THINK THE ENEMY HAS BEEN OVERCOME--
"--WHEN, IN FACT, I HAVEN'T EVEN GOTTEN STARTED."
HEY, RAD RED! WE GOT YOUR MESSAGE AND HURRIED OVER AS FAST AS WE COULD!
HUH?
WHAT MESSAGE?! WHADDYA' TALKING ABOUT?
SONIC! TAILS!
THE GUARDIAN!
KNUCKLES!


NOW DON'T YOU WORRY, CHILDREN, FOR YOUR TRUE LORD AND MASTER IS HERE!
SIMPLY WORSHIP THE GROUND I WALK ON--
--OR PLAN ON SPENDING THE REST OF YOUR DAYS IN ETERNAL PAIN AND SOLITUDE!
THAT'S SOME CHOICE, MATE!
TO BE CONTINUED IN
SONIC
THE HEDGEHOG
ARCHIVES VOLUME 15